

TO: Sup. Eddie Cullen, Chairman, Intergovernmental Relations Committee
Members, Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Liz Stephens, Legislative Liaison

RE: State & Local Legislative Updates

DATE: September 12, 2016

I. State Budget Developments

On September 2, 2016, preliminary information regarding general fund tax collections for the 2015-16 fiscal year was released by the Department of Revenue (DOR). According to DOR, revenues totaled \$15,090.5 million in 2015-16, which was 3.8% higher than the previous year. Actual collections were \$84.8 million, or 0.6%, below the amount estimated by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB). Final general fund tax collections, along with departmental revenues and expenditures for 2015-16, will be available in mid-October when the state's Annual Fiscal Report is released by the Department of Administration.

Governor Walker has ordered the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to submit its full budget request on September 15, 2016, rather than November as it normally does. Governor Walker has directed the DOT's budget to reflect the following priorities:

- Identify efficiency savings within DOT, including the implementation of less costly design practices.
- Examine federal mandates that increase costs and other mechanisms that can save taxpayer dollars.
- Allocate savings towards local road aids and highway maintenance and provide an increase in local road aids and state highway maintenance."
- Minimize spending on mega-projects in southeastern Wisconsin.
- Hold bonding to a "reasonable" level.
- Reject any major tax or fee increases.

The DOT's proposed budget is expected to include delays on road expansion work and cutbacks on upkeep of heavily traveled highways. By contrast, in order to avoid such delays and cutbacks, Assembly Republicans have advocated an "everything on the table" philosophy, including tax and fee increases as well as interstate tolling. Senate Republicans have indicated that they do not support such moves.

By statute, state agency budget requests are due by September 15. Governor Walker has directed state agencies to maintain their overall fiscal year 2017-18 and 2018-19 GPR budgets at the fiscal year 2016-17 adjusted base. He has also directed that there be no growth in SEG-funded administrative operations. The Governor has asked all agencies to engage in a "realignment" process in order to fund programs and initiatives within their current budget allocations rather than

seek additional resources to do so. In addition, 2015 Act 201 requires each agency to submit two proposals relating to state operations in addition to its standard biennial budget request. One proposal relates to a 0 percent change from the agency base budget in each year; the second proposal relates to a 5 percent reduction of the agency base budget.

II. Major Gubernatorial Announcements & Developments

On August 18, 2016, in response to the deadly police shooting of Sylville Smith, Governor Walker announced his commitment to work with religious and community leaders, elected officials, and “anyone else who shares a genuine interest in improving the educational and economic opportunities for everyone in our state.”

On August 26, 2016, Governor Walker announced a joint economic and workforce development effort for the City of Milwaukee which includes a new commitment of \$4.5 million state investment. The effort will center on raising awareness of existing programs and providing additional resources for employment and blight-elimination programs. The state agencies involved in leading this effort are the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA). Highlights of the program include:

- The state, through DCF, will allocate an additional \$1.5 million in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds to partner with the city of Milwaukee for employment programs for eligible individuals who want a job.
- The state will provide \$2 million to assist in the demolition, deconstruction, and rehabilitation of foreclosed and blighted properties in the city of Milwaukee.
- The state, through DWD, will allocate \$1 million of Wisconsin Fast Forward funds to employer-based job training programs for the city of Milwaukee.
- DWD’s Division of Employment & Training has prepared “Mobile Response” equipment with laptops, routers, peripheral equipment, etc., to establish job seeker assessment and career counseling services at various locations in the area in partnership with Employ Milwaukee and other state partners.

On August 26, 2016, Governor Walker Governor Scott Walker signed a statewide naloxone standing order, which allows pharmacists to dispense the medication that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose without requiring individual prescriptions.

August 30, 2016, Governor Walker, in conjunction with Mexican Foreign Affairs Secretary Claudia Ruiz Massieu, celebrated the opening of the new Mexican Consulate building in Milwaukee.

III. Major Legislative Developments & Announcements

The Speaker’s Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness released its report on August 30, 2016. The Task Force had five meetings, which included tours and input from stakeholders, since

September 2015. The task force report includes several recommendations to Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) and the members of the Wisconsin State Assembly, including:

- **School report card.** Modify the state school report card to value technical education course enrollments and the placement of graduates in technical college programs.
- **High school entrepreneurship programs.** Encourage the replication of programs like the Cardinal Manufacturing program at Eleva-Strum High School, located in Strum, Wisconsin, in high schools in other locations.
- **Exception to levy limits.** Consider providing an exception to general local levy limits for the purchase of equipment used in technical education programs.
- **Math skills.** Encourage the integration of math skills in technical education curricula, and the integration of technical education projects in math curricula.
- **DWD grants.** For grants provided by DWD to technical colleges, grant outcome goals could be modified to be tied to regional workforce needs, utilizing regional reports rather than statewide reports. The grants would also be structured to allow for the funding of students' travel costs, particularly in geographically large technical college districts. In addition, grant criteria could be modified to allow technical colleges to enroll students during the summer between their junior and senior years.
- **Technical education curriculum clearinghouse.** Direct the Department of Public Instruction to implement a clearinghouse for technical education curricula.

On September 7, 2016, Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) and Majority Leader Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) along with members of the Assembly Republican majority unveiled their Forward Agenda, which is intended as a broad outline of the caucus' goals for next session. The Forward Agenda has three sections: improving the economy, expanding opportunities, and building strong families and safe communities, and includes the following recommendations:

- Establish the Speaker's Task Force on Tax Reform to examine ways to simplify the tax code for Wisconsin families.
- Identify a long-term solution to the transportation funding crisis.
- Establish of a sales tax holiday to for certain school supplies and clothing prior to the start of the school year.
- Develop a package of worker training initiatives.
- Provide a computer or tablet to every high school freshman, regardless of income.
- Extend the UW System tuition freeze.
- Create tax-free savings account programs for parental leave, long-term care, education and early childhood education/childcare.
- Modify the 911 funding mechanism for to help ensure local governments are able to modernize their PSAPs and upgrade their 911 emergency systems.
- Examine the viability of individualized transit options such as ride sharing as a supplement to traditional mass transit systems.
- Review juvenile justice system practices, including arrest and intake procedures, supervision orders, charging recommendations, and sentencing.
- Ensure law enforcement and the courts have the tools they need to fight the growing number of carjackings.

- Continue to address human trafficking by assisting vulnerable populations with targeted policies to address homelessness and unaccompanied youth as well as educational efforts for school-age children.

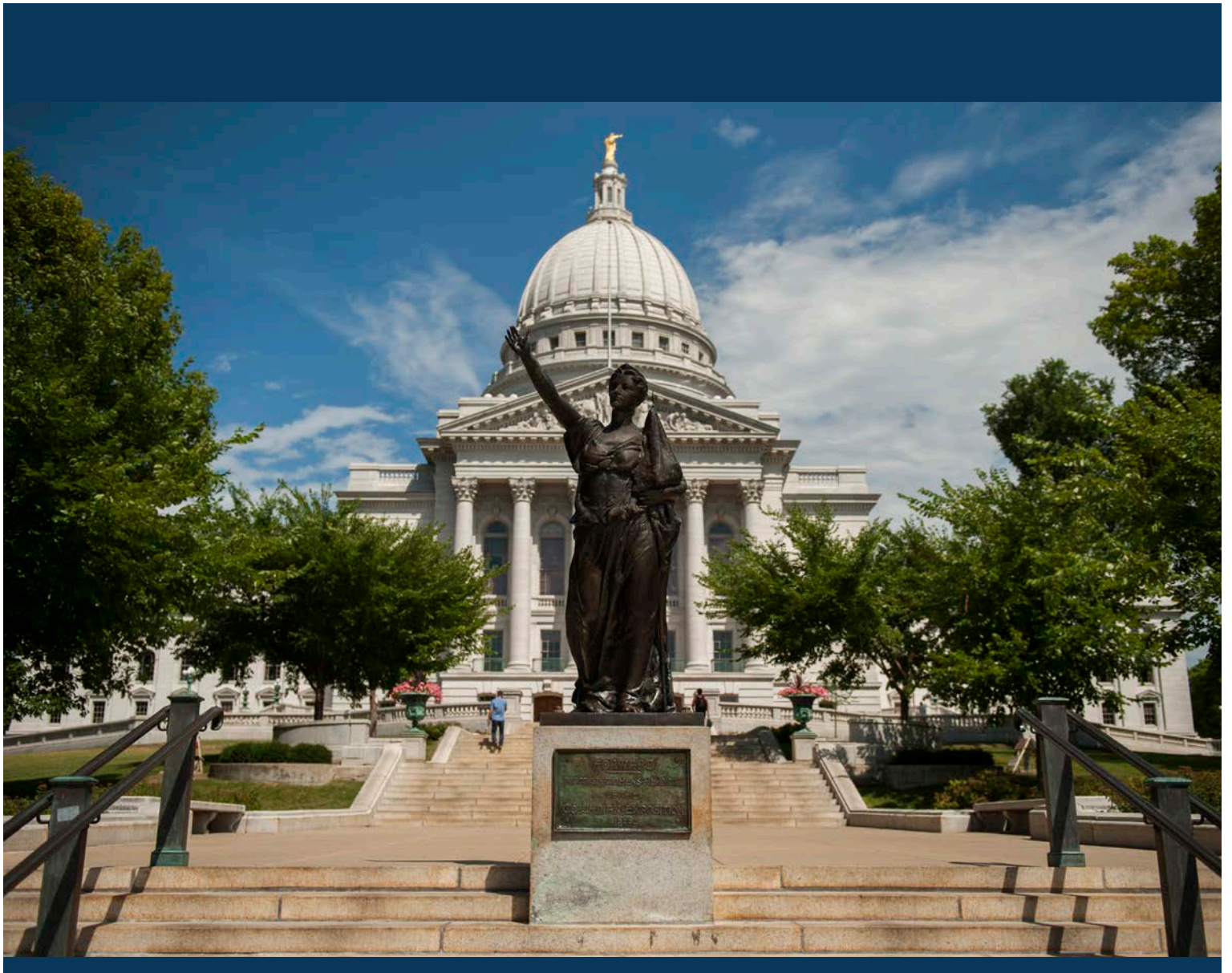
On September 8, 2016, Assembly Democratic Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) and Assistant Democratic Leader Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) held a press conference in the State Capitol to discuss a memo Legislative Fiscal Bureau that shows state general aid payments to rural school districts, defined in the memo as those that receive sparsity aid, has declined by 13.5 percent from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

IV. Local Government Announcements & Developments

On September 29, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., a Statewide Town Hall Event on Transportation Funding held in nearly every county across Wisconsin. During this event county, city, town, and village officials will gather in their area to discuss the transportation funding crisis and how it affects their individual communities. Information about the event can be found at <https://www.turnoutfortransportation.com/>.

As local Boards of Review conclude their business for 2016, an emerging trend has been identified. So-called “big box” retailers have begun arguing that the market value of their operational store should be based on the sales of similar size "comparable" properties that are vacant and abandoned. A handful of Wisconsin courts have upheld this theory of property taxation; however, many more will have to analyze this argument due to the increased number of property tax objections received by local governments on this basis in 2016.

On August 1, 2016, the DOR published its Equalized Values, Net New Construction, and County Apportionment Reports. Reports can be found at www.revenue.wi.gov.



FORWARD

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN AGENDA

WISCONSIN ASSEMBLY

GOP

SEPTEMBER 2016

FORWARD

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN AGENDA



Every Wisconsin resident deserves to have the opportunity for a great education, a family-supporting job and a safe neighborhood. The American Dream should be within everyone's reach in Wisconsin and government should not put barriers in the way to personal success. By focusing on these priorities, Wisconsin Assembly Republicans will continue to move our state forward. We will look to address the major concerns in our state. We want long-term solutions, not quick fixes to the problems that face Wisconsin families.

The Forward Agenda is a broad outline of goals for the 2017-18 legislative session and beyond. We believe that less government is good government, one that fosters an environment for job growth. This agenda has three sections: improving the economy, expanding opportunities, and building strong families and safe communities.

This agenda builds on a conservative foundation that has helped the state recover from the recession. Republicans have balanced the state budget, cut taxes and made Wisconsin open for business. With historically low unemployment rates, continued job growth and a vibrant economy, Wisconsin's future continues to look bright under Republican leadership.

The first Assembly Republican Forward Agenda in 2014 contained roughly 50 proposals; a vast majority of them were accomplished. From increasing our investment in K-12 schools to assisting rural schools with their challenges, the Assembly majority members delivered on their promises. We expanded training grants, invested 60 percent of all new revenue on medical care for the poor and continued the fight against opioid abuse. Republicans reduced fraud in government programs to allow for benefits to be received by those who truly need them.

You play an important role in shaping Wisconsin's future and we value your input. Share your ideas at WisconsinAssemblyRepublicans.com.



JOB GROWTH AND GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Improving the Economy

Assembly Republicans are focused on making Wisconsin a more attractive place to do business. While government doesn't create jobs, it can create the climate and infrastructure necessary for businesses to prosper. Assembly Republicans will continue their commitment to improving our tax and regulatory climate, while guaranteeing our transportation infrastructure meets the needs of Wisconsin businesses and families.

Tax Reform

Assembly Republicans understand that the money earned by hardworking taxpayers belongs to them, and not the government. Holding the line on taxes has been the top priority for Assembly Republicans. We will continue our efforts to simplify the tax code and ensure our tax climate incentivizes job growth and encourages economic development.





- To help accomplish the goal of fairer, flatter and lower taxes, we will look to form a group to work with leading economists to study the makeup of Wisconsin's overall tax structure. The task force will examine the mixture of numerous state and local taxes that fund government in Wisconsin, while keeping an eye out for opportunities to make our tax code fairer, flatter and lower.

Fairer, Flatter, Lower Taxes

● Wisconsin Republicans have made great progress in fixing Wisconsin's tax code over the last six years. But our tax climate can be more welcoming for businesses, seniors, the middle class and young professionals. Our fractured tax code puts small businesses at a disadvantage, as they must hire tax and legal professionals to navigate all of the rules and regulations. Assembly Republicans will continue our efforts to eliminate loopholes and targeted tax breaks in favor of broader based tax relief. Whether it is removing outdated and illogical exemptions to the sales tax, federalizing our tax code where it makes sense, or targeting burdensome and inefficient taxes, we will explore ways to improve Wisconsin's tax climate. First and foremost, we must lessen the tax burden on Wisconsin families.



**Incentivizing Generosity -
Creating IRA Charitable Rollovers**

- Many of Wisconsin’s retirees are our most generous citizens, supporting charities and nonprofits throughout our communities. The Assembly Republicans will explore creating a Wisconsin IRA charitable rollover, to match the federal tax code, creating simplicity and fostering generosity.

Sales Tax Holiday

- Assembly Republicans support the creation of a sales tax holiday to give tax relief to all Wisconsinites and help hardworking families stretch their budgets in preparation for the new school year.

Eliminate the “Victory Tax”

- While many countries subsidize their Olympic competitors with taxpayer dollars, the United States Olympic Team is fully funded by private donations and sponsorships. Wisconsin is home to a great number of Olympic athletes, but when they bring their medals and prize winnings home they are subject to income tax. Our Olympic athletes work hard enough in the pool and on the ice. Assembly Republicans will make sure the state isn’t taking a cut of their hard earned Olympic winnings.



Transportation

Making Wisconsin open for business means more than just keeping our tax and regulatory burden low. It also requires providing the transportation infrastructure needed to get our many great Wisconsin manufacturing and agricultural products to market, ensuring our hardworking citizens commute to work safely and quickly, and providing access to our abundant natural resources and tourist destinations. Roads and infrastructure are one of the fundamental responsibilities of government and Assembly Republicans are committed to growing our economy by meeting our transportation and infrastructure needs.

**Increased Debt Service in
Transportation Budget**



2014-2015 2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019

Portion of every dollar spent to pay off debt

Assembly Republicans will conduct a thorough review of every option available to invest in our vital transportation infrastructure. First and foremost we want to enact cost saving reforms to cut down on waste. We will strive to do all we can to ensure every dollar is being spent efficiently.

However, even after all possible cost-saving measures are taken, it may become clear that our transportation funding problems remain. We will still work to find a sustainable solution because we believe our state is relying too heavily on borrowing. While we know there is no easy answer, we will work hard to put in place a solution that will resolve our funding deficit for future generations.



Here are a few solutions that Assembly Republicans will explore this session as we work toward solving this problem:

- Assembly Republicans will examine options such as improving incentives and penalties during the construction process to help more projects finish on time and on budget.
- The Legislative Audit Bureau is conducting an audit of the State Highway Program to determine where efficiencies may be found. Assembly Republicans will review the results of the audit, and embrace opportunities for improvements and increased efficiency.
- Assembly Republicans will explore new revenue generating opportunities for the Department of Transportation, such as naming rights, drones for inspection of projects, tollways, and advertising and sponsorship opportunities.
- User fees are an equitable way to recoup the costs associated with the wear and tear that users put on our infrastructure. Wisconsin can ensure these user fees are fair, while committing to keep them below our neighboring states.

- Town, county and municipal roads are vital for our local economies. Assembly Republicans will consider giving options to local governments, with limits and restraints to protect local taxpayers.

- Wisconsin's interstates are the backbone of our transportation network. They get our many agricultural and manufacturing products to market, and help citizens and out-of-state tourists access our state's many recreational opportunities. Tolling is a fair, user fee based system that can help provide a dedicated funding source to ensure our interstates are able to meet the needs of a growing economy.

Transportation Fast Facts



US DOT ranks WI Roads
47th in nation

20% of WI jobs are
within 2 miles of SE Freeways

Debt payments have doubled in
last 10 years

\$939M Deficit in next budget

WI 4 neighboring states pay
about **61%** more in gas
taxes and fees

Fuel Tax makes of
54% of funding

Cost of construction has
doubled since 2003

Tolling also eases the burden on Wisconsinites by ensuring that out-of-state travelers are contributing to the transportation infrastructure they use. Though federal government approval is necessary, Assembly Republicans will continue to explore the viability of a tolling system on Wisconsin's interstate highways.

- Transportation is more than just highways and interstates. Many Wisconsin businesses and communities rely on our extensive freight rail network as well. Assembly Republicans will ensure our freight rail infrastructure is a strong and reliable network that promotes economic development and job creation.



Reviewing Government Regulation, Cutting Red Tape, and Improving Government Services

For too long burdensome regulations made by unelected bureaucrats have turned state laws into a maze of requirements and restrictions. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, doing their best to grow and expand. Unfortunately, outdated and unnecessary regulations often inhibit job creation. Assembly Republicans will ensure job creators can spend more time focused on growing their business and less time complying with a web of regulations.

Domestic Partnership Streamlining

- With recent federal court rulings impacting marriage, our state is now facing confusion regarding the status of domestic partnerships in our state. Assembly Republicans will look to clarify this law to avoid confusion for our citizens, county clerks, county register of deeds, and the state Vital Records Office.

Administrative Rule Reform

- Administrative rules have the force and effect of law on the citizens and businesses of Wisconsin. However, many of these regulations have been created without sufficient oversight and input from the citizens of the state through their elected state legislators. Assembly Republicans will lead the way to ensure the public has adequate input in the rulemaking process, and that rules are not enacted without a full understanding of the costs and benefits they will have on our families and businesses.

Red Tape Review

- Assembly Republicans have made an unprecedented commitment to reviewing every single regulation in the 1,768 chapters of the Administrative Code. Thus far, approximately 27 percent of the code has been reviewed to date. We will continue our effort to cut through the red tape, to get old, antiquated rules off the books, and ensure our regulations are fair and make sense.



Attracting the Best and Brightest

- Improving government services means ensuring the state of Wisconsin employees are among the best and brightest. The state recently adopted civil service reform, cutting through the bureaucratic hiring process that could discourage many from applying. The next step is to explore options to review the pay structure for state employees, reduce overtime costs, and ensure the state can adequately reward its hard-working employees.

Elimination of the Position of State Treasurer

- Assembly Republicans strive to make government as efficient as possible, always keeping in mind the importance of being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Many responsibilities of the Wisconsin State Treasurer have been relieved or transferred to other departments. The position's remaining responsibilities could be fulfilled by other means. It's time we eliminate this unnecessary office to save money and reduce the size of government. In order to accomplish this goal, we need to change the constitution. The legislature has already completed a successful first consideration of this change and we will look to take up a second consideration, then leaving voters with the final approval.

Focus on Evidence Based Solutions

- Assembly Republicans will continue our commitment to focus on evidence-based policy making. Using the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative (Results First), we will apply a cost-benefit analysis approach when investing in policies and programs to deliver lower costs and better outcomes. Embracing this analysis will help us consider new legislation and review current agency programming.

27% of the code has been reviewed to date





Improving Veterans Services

- Assembly Republicans will work to ensure the state is meeting the needs of our veterans. We will explore options to improve coordination between County Veterans Service Offices and the Department of Veterans Affairs, all while staying focused on accomplishing our number one goal: ensuring Wisconsin veterans have access to the services they deserve. Assembly Republicans will make certain our Wisconsin Veterans Homes are providing excellent service and work with the Legislative Audit Bureau to guarantee our veterans are well cared for. We will also maintain solvency of the Veterans Trust Fund, as it helps provide so many of these vital services for our veterans.

WEDC Accountability and Economic Development

- Assembly Republicans will work with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

(WEDC) and the private sector to make sure WEDC has the proper balance of authority, flexibility and oversight to help Wisconsin's economy grow and prosper. A recent study by the National Governors Association reported that the three most important characteristics of having a successful agency are private sector involvement, increased collaboration among economic development entities, and creating an effective evaluation system. Assembly Republicans will support and help focus the mission of WEDC, bring new businesses to the state, and help current businesses grow and expand.

- Wisconsin is a beautiful state with many benefits and unique opportunities; we recognize how truly fortunate we are to live here. It is vital to get this positive message to those who are considering visiting, moving or doing business here. We will increase our focus on statewide branding and outreach to promote the exceptional people, lifestyle, and resources we have here in Wisconsin.

Fighting Federal Government Overreach

- The overreach from the federal government in recent years has been excessive especially in the areas of healthcare, environmental regulations, and coercive conditions attached to federal funding. Assembly Republicans will continue our efforts to fight back against federal overreach, including support for the newly created Office of the Solicitor General and seeking waivers from the federal government in order to pursue new, innovative state ideas. We will also explore working with other states to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.



Responding to changing technology, fostering new industries, developing new markets

New technologies create new opportunities for Wisconsin citizens and businesses. Our focus on ridesharing technologies proved incredibly successful in improving mobility and opportunity for Wisconsinites. Whether it is growing the economy or other emerging industries, Assembly Republicans will continue that effort by ensuring Wisconsin is a state that welcomes emerging industries and businesses exploring new technologies.

Autonomous Vehicles

- Technological advances in automobiles have made autonomous and self-driving vehicles a reality. To take advantage of this innovation, Assembly Republicans will explore partnering with the University of Wisconsin and developing legislation that would permit these vehicles on our roads, first to be tested and then to operate regularly with proper safeguards in place.

Personal Delivery Devices

- Personal Delivery Devices are another emerging technology that our state statutes are currently ill equipped to handle. This new technology provides “last mile” delivery of parcels, groceries, and takeout to customers in a safe and cost effective way. Wisconsin Republicans will lead the effort to review our statutes to accommodate the testing, development, and implementation of this technological advancement.

Individualized Transit Options

- Individuals without personal vehicles have limited options to get to where they are going, whether it is work, school or medical needs. Traditionally, many have relied on public mass transportation. However, mass transit is expensive for the government to run and is generally limited to larger cities, with service limited to a handful of routes. Assembly Republicans will explore options for using ridesharing services to connect new employees with work opportunities and medical transit needs.

Home Rental Services

- Vacation rental websites are another example of a new technology that is fostering new connections and business opportunities. These websites are giving travelers additional options and can be an incredible boost for Wisconsin’s tourism industry. Assembly Republicans want Wisconsinites and tourists to have access to these lodging options and to make sure these services are contributing to our tourism industry in the same manner as traditional hotel and lodging establishments.



Modernizing the Dairy and Agricultural Industries

- Agriculture and dairy industries are more than just a major part of our economy, they are part of our identity as Wisconsinites. We will continue efforts to support Wisconsin farmers as they improve and modernize their industry so they can continue feeding our state, country and world.

Broadband expansion

- Wisconsin has made significant efforts to improve access to broadband, especially in the rural parts of our state. However, much more work needs to be done to ensure all Wisconsinites have the access they need for work, school, and remote healthcare and telemedicine. Assembly Republicans created a Legislative Council Study Committee on this issue and will explore reducing barriers and costs to expand service.

Promote international trade and exports

- In 2015, our state exported \$22.4 billion in Wisconsin goods and products. Assembly Republicans will continue to pursue ways to increase our exports, especially with emerging markets like China, Africa and other U.S. trading partners. Developing relationships with foreign countries and legislatures will be key in fostering communication, goodwill and trust for increased cultural exchange and access to new markets.

Wisconsin Annual Exports \$22.4 Billion in 2015

Canada •••
Over \$7.3 billion

Mexico •••••
Over \$2.9 billion

China •••
Over \$1.5 billion

United Kingdom ••
Over \$825 million



Japan •••
Over \$815 million

Germany ••
Over \$700 million

Honorary Consuls

- Assembly Republicans will work to encourage the formation of more Honorary Consuls here in Wisconsin. We want foreign firms and tourists to have additional Wisconsin-based resources when choosing a travel destination or expanding their businesses in the U.S.



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

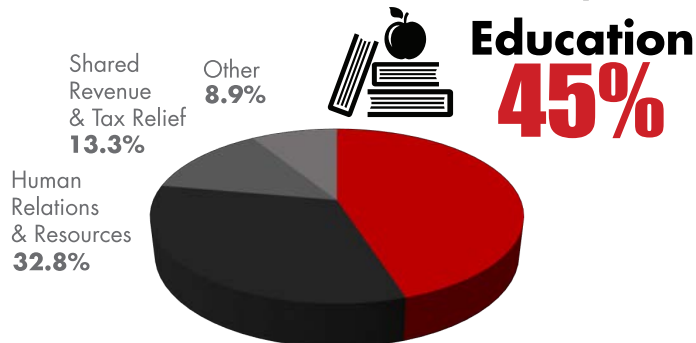
Expanding Opportunities

A quality education is essential to help grow a stronger economy and make the American Dream a reality for more Wisconsinites. Whether it is our public schools, private schools, charter schools or virtual schools, the path forward in life begins in the classroom. We are proud of the excellent educational experiences available in Wisconsin and we are committed to investing in our schools. We have frozen tuition for UW System schools for four years and granted the UW System flexibilities to help them better function and succeed. We have also increased investments to our K-12 schools, even though federal aid has decreased, through per pupil support, categorical aids, and investing in measures to reduce property taxes. Assembly Republicans will continue to support responsible legislation to improve outcomes and provide pathways to higher education and the workforce.



2015-2017 **State Budget**

A breakdown of **how** each tax dollar **is spent**



K-12 Administrative Reform - Public Schools

The vast majority of Wisconsin students are educated in a public school. As such, funding for K-12 public education is the state's largest financial investment, totaling 32 percent of the biennial budget. Assembly Republicans will evaluate the school funding formula, looking to correct problems that may bring unfair distributions. We will also look for ways to provide schools with money-saving flexibilities, allowing more dollars to stay in the classroom.

Reducing Administrative Overhead

- Many programs supervised by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) could be more efficient if overseen by local school officials. A thorough review of all the programs administered by DPI should be done, with input from local district administrators, to determine which tasks could be better accomplished at the local level. Any savings generated from reducing staff at DPI would be sent directly to schools.



Increase Cooperation Among School Districts

- Assembly Republicans would like to create incentives for school districts to coordinate their administrative functions. Cooperation on administrative tasks would streamline operations and save districts money while also maintaining the identity, pride, and autonomy of individual districts.

Zones of Innovation

- The constraints, regulations, and red tape school districts face make it difficult to be innovative in the way they educate and prepare our students for life after graduation. By supporting zones of innovation, we could allow a school district or a combination of school districts to ask for an exemption from statutes, except those relating to the health and safety of our students, in order to try out a new, innovative policy for a limited period of time. If these new ideas or innovations prove successful, they can be replicated in other districts. Assembly Republicans will explore what zones of innovation could look like in our state to give school districts additional options for giving students the tools they need to succeed.

More Expansive Summer School Programs

- Summer school can be a great way to keep students engaged in learning, allowing them to catch up or even get ahead academically. Assembly Republicans will explore providing additional funding or flexibilities to form more robust summer school programs statewide.



Continued Support for School Choice

The most important component of the educational system in Wisconsin is making sure there is a choice. Our state has a strong history of parental choice in education. We remain committed to supporting the school choice programs in Wisconsin as well as open-enrollment, charter and virtual schools, and homeschooling programs that have helped parents secure the best possible education for their children.

Explore Education Savings Accounts

- We will explore implementing Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) to provide families with access to savings that can be used only for education-related expenses, including tuition, textbooks and tutoring. By giving parents greater autonomy to decide what kind of education their children should receive, they will have more

opportunities to customize educational programs to best meet their individual needs, rather than expecting everyone to fit into the same traditional school model.

Addressing the Skills Gap and Encouraging Technical Education and STEM Careers

Support Technical Training in Schools

- The Speaker's Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness heard from many experts about the importance of participation in technical training classes. These classes expose students to new interests and can help them develop a plan for the future after graduation. We will explore providing financial support to ensure all schools offer vocational training classes



Introduce Students to Local Technical Jobs

- Assembly Republicans will consider creating a school district matching grant program to encourage collaboration with local manufacturing businesses and other private sector businesses. This will provide students hands-on experience with up-to-date manufacturing equipment and software that wouldn't otherwise be possible.
- We will also encourage student-run businesses and entrepreneurial experiences within the high school, similar to the examples from the Speaker's Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness public hearings, to help provide real world training to students in these important sectors of our economy.



STEM, Computer Science, and Robotics

- Early exposure to math and science can set students up for a lifetime of success. Increasing access to computer science in our classrooms will be key to developing our 21st century workforce and offers great potential to work in STEM-related fields. Assembly Republicans will look to encourage greater access to computer science for students, including fun and engaging activities like robotics competitions. Increasing the number of students involved in STEM coursework and hands-on activities will help students develop valuable technical skills, confidence, and teamwork, and help our workforce meet the demands of a new economy.

Continued Support for Fab Labs

- Fab labs bring STEM curriculum to students as early as kindergarten, setting them up for greater success upon graduation. Fab Lab programs can help address the growing skills gap by providing additional STEM education skills to encourage students to explore these rewarding employment opportunities. While the original basis for Fab Labs was to assist with the skills gap and declining employment in rural areas, this successful program has expanded to help schools in all parts of our state—rural and urban.

Preparing Students for the Future

1:1 Learning Initiative

- Assembly Republicans will make sure every high school freshman is provided a computer or tablet so that every single student may connect to the outside world. Our future workforce needs to be tech savvy and ready to grow our economy. We understand technology is changing the way our schools operate; students use fewer textbooks and have more online assignments and readings. To make sure students are able to access the internet on their provided computer or tablet, we will also look to increase the ability of students to check-out mobile hotspots or begin providing Wi-Fi capabilities on school buses.

Financial Literacy and Life Skills Courses

- Assembly Republicans will continue to push financial literacy and life skills courses as a crucial part of a high school education. An increased focus and emphasis on financial literacy and life skills-based coursework will help our students get their lives started on the right track.



Teach our Foundational Documents

- To prepare students to be active, engaged and informed members of society, we should ensure that the texts that shaped our nation - the Federalist Papers, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence - are taught in every Wisconsin classroom. Assembly Republicans will also look to gradually increase the metric for what is considered a passing score on the required civics exam.

Addressing Urban Issues

The Speaker's Task Force on Urban Education was convened to listen to educators, administrators and community partners and identify solutions to the unique challenges that face larger, urban school districts. Assembly Republicans will work to implement many of the task force recommendations, and investigate other options to assist with the unique challenges urban schools face.

Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program

- The Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program (OSPP) was included in the 2015-17 state budget to create meaningful and effective change for the students in the failing schools of

Milwaukee Public School District. Assembly Republicans will continue to work with stakeholders to get students access to the best education possible. For too long, too many of our students have been stuck in these failing schools.

Meeting the Challenges of Teaching in an Urban Environment

- The Task Force on Urban Education heard from many administrators and educators that special training is needed for anyone looking to teach in an urban environment. Every instructor should be trained in how to teach reading, regardless of their license category, and college programs should be specifically tailored for teachers looking to enter a more diverse environment.

Teacher Safety Study



In Wisconsin schools, **11.3%** teachers said they were physically abused by students.

(highest percentage in the country)

2011-2012 school year

Source: US Department of Education

Improve Classroom Safety

- To retain top quality staff, we will encourage more experienced teachers to serve as mentors to new staff. We should also make sure that our teachers feel safe in the classroom and that other students can learn in a safe environment. Passing a Teacher Protection Act is one way to ensure that school is a safe place for everyone.



Addressing Rural Issues

Assembly Republicans will build off of our efforts in previous sessions to provide solutions for problems facing students in rural school districts. Roughly 44 percent of the state's public school students attend school in a rural community.

Broadband Access for all Students

- In today's world, access to high speed internet is essential for all students, but is significantly limited in many rural parts of the state. Assembly Republicans will explore unique ways to make the internet available; ideas include using school buses or providing funding to issue hotspots to students.

Minimum Aid Payments for School Districts

- There are significant flaws in our school funding formula that harm some rural school districts. We will explore options for providing financial assistance to the high property value districts, particularly rural, lake districts, that receive either "no-aid" or "primary aid only." This could help make the funding formula fairer for certain northern districts.

Higher Education

Assembly Republicans understand that investing in a skilled and educated workforce is critical to meeting the workforce needs of the state now and in the future. Our UW System graduates are some of the best in the nation and are a key part of our state's workforce. Assembly Republicans will focus on keeping tuition affordable by supporting extending the tuition freeze for in-state undergraduates. We will also explore ways to encourage students to graduate on-time, especially in high demand fields. The UW System should operate efficiently and focus on placing more funding in the classrooms and less in administration, which can also help prevent students from graduating later because of a lack of key course offerings.

Improving Transfer of Credits

- Assembly Republicans will further review the way credits transfer from the Wisconsin Technical College System to the UW System. A more streamlined process to transfer credits from technical colleges to the UW could help more students graduate on time and with less student debt.

Time to Degree and Degree Completion

- Every year a student spends in college not only costs more in tuition, but is also a lost year of earned wages. Assembly Republicans support strategies that promote graduating students on time and will look at ways we can assist students in accomplishing that goal.



- Students who graduate and earn a degree are much more likely to pay back their student loans. Assembly Republicans will support programs that promote student success, retention of students, and degree completion.

Ideological Diversity and Free Speech Protections

- College campuses are supposed to be a place where students explore new ideas and gain new perspectives. A critical part of a university education is engaging in meaningful discussion with individuals who hold different viewpoints. The political correctness culture on college campuses becomes detrimental when it stops dialogue and constrains the free exchange of ideas. Assembly Republicans are committed to the freedom of expression and the vigorous debate of ideas which is the foundation of a great university. We will support efforts to strengthen freedom of speech on campus and promote diversity of thought and experience. Assembly Republicans will challenge the UW system to embrace ideological diversity on campus and ensure diverse perspectives are present and protected in our classrooms and faculty lounges.

Encouraging Business Experience and Internships

- A worthwhile internship in Wisconsin can be a key factor for many students when determining whether or not to stay here after graduation. In addition, internships help create a well-rounded, experienced future graduate, provide a benefit to businesses, and increase the likelihood for career placement after graduation. Colleges and universities in our state need to do all they can to assist students in receiving a valuable internship or business experience.

Performance Metrics

- Taxpayer funding for the Wisconsin Technical College System and University of Wisconsin System should be transparent, and those institutions should be accountable for how taxpayer money is spent. Assembly Republicans support using performance metrics to allocate state money to these institutions.
- An important measure of transparency is the extent to which our universities and colleges share information regarding a student's cost of degree and potential future earnings opportunities based on their chosen degree. We seek to increase transparency on this important information.



Financial Aid

- An adequately funded financial aid system is one piece to keeping college affordable and providing access for students who would otherwise be unable to attend college. Assembly Republicans support investing in students who are pursuing their education.

UW System Tuition Freeze



Saving an average college student up to **\$6,000** over 4 years.

*Exclude tuition figures from UW-Madison. UW Colleges

Remedial Education

- Remedial education, while necessary at times, can be costly for students who don't receive credit for their coursework, taxpayers who support similar classes in high schools and colleges, and institutions who must devote resources to providing the remedial class. Assembly Republicans will work to improve the effectiveness of remedial education and explore programs that increase the success of students enrolled in these courses.

Developing our Workforce

Career Education and Workforce Development Coordinators

- To provide students with a better understanding of career opportunities and provide industries with skilled laborers, the state could consider options to create a pilot program to employ regional career education and workforce development coordinators to assist students, parents, and high school counselors in utilizing programs provided by the state. One coordinator could be assigned to a single CESA chosen by DPI, in conjunction with DWD, after considering applications from the 12 CESAs.

Occupational Licensing Reform

- Excessive and unnecessary occupational licensing and regulations can discourage individuals from entering the workforce and attaining financial independence. Assembly Republicans will review education, experience, and other licensing requirements and ensure Wisconsin's requirements do not exceed the national average. We will also seek to eliminate licenses in Wisconsin that do not provide legitimate public safety benefits.

Expansion of the Transitional Jobs Program

- Wisconsin's transitional jobs program has helped thousands of low income adults gain the necessary work experience to develop the skills they need to reenter the workforce while also filling needed positions within the business community. Assembly Republicans will look to expand this program even further to those communities that need it to help provide valuable work experience to even more Wisconsinites who have had trouble finding long-term employment.



Certificate of Qualification for Employment

- We must continue to focus on lowering our unemployment rate and meeting our workforce development needs. Being convicted of a crime comes with a host of restrictions, often including the inability to get an occupational license. Assembly Republicans will work to establish Certificates of Qualification for Employment for individuals who have paid their debt to society and now wish to join the labor force with a trade or skill they possess. A well-designed program will help get this segment of our population back to work as contributing members of society.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DROPS 15-year low



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Disability Workforce Improvement

- According to the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, 80 percent of those with disabilities have a desire to work, but only 19 percent are gainfully employed. Studies show that people with disabilities who work have improved health outcomes and require less Medicaid dollars. Employment also provides the individuals with a new level of independence and confidence. Assembly Republicans support measures to adequately match employers and potential employees, and measures to provide the proper support and training.

Incentivizing Startups in STEM Fields

- Students who have business experience or even start a business themselves while still in college are much more likely to stay in Wisconsin after graduation. To encourage the creation of new businesses and to prevent graduates from leaving our state, Assembly Republicans will explore removing a burden for students in starting a business by waiving certain fees required to start an LLC. Particularly, we will look at waiving certain fees associated with LLC filings for high demand fields, such as engineering, computer science, alternative energy research, and the hard sciences.





Building Strong Families, Safe Communities

We all should be proud of our great state. Wisconsin is considered to be one of the best states for healthcare. We have some of the best communities to live in, raise a family, and call home. The health, safety, and quality of life our citizens enjoy is what draws families to our state and, more importantly, it's what keeps them here. Assembly Republicans will work to retain the quality of life for our citizens by ensuring access to potentially lifesaving options for our most vulnerable populations, building safer communities, giving families more paths to security and independence, and protecting the state's great natural resources. Assembly Republicans understand the ability of our citizens to lead healthy, safe, and ultimately successful lives is key to the overall success of our state as a whole.

FORWARD

Health

Assembly Republicans have been a leader on a number of important fronts relating to the health and quality of life for Wisconsinites. We have led the fight against the growing epidemic of heroin and opioid addiction. Our Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia brought families, stakeholders, and caregivers together to address this growing concern. And we helped bring forth one of the most comprehensive packages of mental health reforms in decades. Although we have accomplished much in the areas of opioid addiction, mental health, and Alzheimer's, there is still more we can do to combat these problems.



HOPE – Heroin and Opiate Prevention and Education

- Wisconsin has led the nation in confronting the opioid epidemic, but there is more to be done regarding the addiction to heroin, opioids, and methamphetamine. We will focus on treatment and recovery options, which will assist in the reduction of recidivism and incarceration.
- In addition, Assembly Republicans will look to better coordinate and manage the state's efforts to fight the opioid epidemic across state agencies.



Heroin, Opioid Prevention and Education

Continued Focus on Alzheimer's

- Assembly Republicans will continue to address issues surrounding Alzheimer's disease. Looking at how to prepare for dementia-related crisis situations and how to address the shortage of those who help provide care to those with Alzheimer's and dementia are particular areas of interest.



Over **5 million** Americans are living with Alzheimer's, and as many as **16 million** will have the disease in 2050.

Mental Health Proposals

- The Department of Health Services says thousands of Wisconsinites are impacted by mental illness every year. A lack of access to needed community supports can result in those struggling with mental health concerns being placed in more costly out-of-home care, institutional settings, or even the correctional system. Assembly Republicans understand these environments can sometimes be more harmful to those struggling and will focus on measures to help increase access to early intervention.
- We will look to improve access to important mental health resources by increasing the number of psychiatrists in our state, streamlining and cutting red tape to enable faster and more efficient treatment, and further reviewing any mental health barriers in our schools.

- Assembly Republicans understand the importance psychologists can play in treating a mental illness. A next step in providing more access to these professionals would be for our state to consider a Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (Psypact). This would allow for greater access to psychological services through electronic means, referred to as telepsychology.

Healthcare Worker Shortage

- Trends in Wisconsin are showing a smaller workforce and an increased demand for health care as our population ages and is living longer. It's important that we maintain Wisconsin's workforce in this critical industry. Physicians, nurses, advanced practice clinicians, and certified nursing assistants (CNAs) will be crucial to recruit and retain in the coming years. Assembly Republicans will look to address this problem by lessening the burdens to enter this field, and incentivize and drive interest in these careers. Burdens such as inordinate levels of training, coursework, testing, or high costs, as compared to our neighbors, could be playing a role in the problem of filling some of these vital positions in our state.
- Clinical experience is essential in the education and training of our future doctors and other health care workers, but unfortunately our state is facing shortage of quality residencies . Assembly Republicans will explore ways to address the issue of health care workforce shortages and increase these types of opportunities, particularly in rural parts of Wisconsin.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners are important in conducting forensic exams for victims of sexual assault, which include both

medical assessments and evidence collection. However, sexual assault forensic examinations are not available in every county. Assembly Republicans will examine ways we can encourage more nurses to receive this important training, in addition to increasing access to exams when needed.

Medicaid

- As the second largest state funded program and the fastest growing, it is vital that the Medicaid program is sustainable, cost-effective, and is able to continue serving those who need this assistance the most. Assembly Republicans will look at ways to curtail costs and provide innovative solutions as this program cannot continue to grow at its current rate and remain sustainable.
- In order to maintain or even reduce current Medical Assistance costs, innovative solutions and long-term structural changes are needed. While there are certainly no easy answers for cost savings and efficiencies, Assembly Republicans can begin to look at several reform ideas. Some of these ideas could include encouraging more transitions of care management programs and other team-based care approaches, and accountable care organizations which utilize further coordination of care. Medicaid is an area that may also require more federal waivers to further explore new and innovative ideas to address the issue of Medicaid spending and costs.



Improving and Expanding the Volunteer Health Care Program

- The Volunteer Health Care Program (VHCP) currently in place allows certain health officials to volunteer to provide their services at a school or nonprofit organization. The benefit of this program is twofold in that it increases access to healthcare for Wisconsinites, especially those who are uninsured or lower income individuals, and it does this without expanding the size of government. Assembly Republicans could encourage the participation of this program even further through allowing hours spent volunteering through the VHCP to count towards fulfilling the health professional's continuing medical education requirements.

Right to Try

- Access to varying healthcare options and solutions are key when trying to make the best decision for you and your family. Assembly Republicans will investigate options for terminally ill individuals to have easier access to experimental therapies, because for those diagnosed with a terminal illness, every day and every option available to them counts.

Long-Term Care Investment Fund

- Long-term care is expensive and costs continue to rise. The majority of Wisconsinites do not have sufficient savings, or any savings, for retirement to cover their long-term care needs and therefore, risk becoming dependent on the state. The creation of a long-term care investment fund could allow individuals to contribute and earn money tax free for their long-term care needs. These funds could be used prior to relying on Medicaid and Medicare.

CBD Oil

- In 2014, the legislature took an important step in allowing access to non-psychoactive Cannabidiol Oil to those struggling with seizure disorders. However, it has since been seen that those individuals are still not able to access this treatment due to the red tape still associated with it. Assembly Republicans will look to address this issue so that those who face seizure disorders are finally able to access an important treatment option originally intended by the initial bill passed by the legislature.

Fighting Crime

Crime in Milwaukee

- Milwaukee police have deemed August 2016 the deadliest month in 25 years. Our largest city is facing a serious challenge. Assembly Republicans are open to opportunities to partner with the city to address this problem. A safer Milwaukee is in the state's best interest. It is clear that more police officers need to be on the streets and criminal behavior must be punished accordingly.



Blue Lives Matter

- Our police and law enforcement officers voluntarily put their lives on the line everyday, placing incredible strain on their families and loved ones. It is reprehensible when these brave protectors are targeted. Assembly Republicans will send a clear message that targeted violent acts against law enforcement officers will be punished to the fullest extent.

Juvenile Justice System Review

- The Milwaukee Police Department has seen a 163 percent increase in juvenile arrests between 2011 and 2015. Assembly Republicans will review how we handle juvenile justice from arrest, to intake, to supervision orders, charging recommendations and sentencing to help address this growing problem. We will examine timing improvements in the system to hold offenders accountable, limiting opportunities to reoffend and ensuring justice is achieved. We will also explore unique solutions, such as expanding access to the Wisconsin Challenge Academy, an alternative education program designed to reclaim the lives of at-risk youth.

Carjacking

- Since 2014 carjackings have risen approximately 700 percent in Milwaukee. Assembly Republicans are committed to ensuring law enforcement and judicial system have the tools they need to fight this growing trend.

Fighting Recidivism

- Assembly Republicans helped form a Legislative Council Study committee on recidivism and the criminal justice system. We will review the recommendations of the committee to break the cycle of recidivism, and encourage these individuals to turn their lives around and become contributing members of society.

Synthetic Drugs

- Drug dealers are constantly developing new synthetic drugs targeted at our youth and destroying lives throughout our state. Law enforcement struggles going after retailers because the changing formulas of these drugs

can evade state law. Assembly Republicans will push legislation giving law enforcement the tools they need to target these new drugs.

Underscore the Seriousness of Drunk Driving

- Drunk driving, even a first time offense, must not be taken lightly. We will look to require first-time offenders to actually appear in court, something not required under current law, ensuring they understand the seriousness of their illegal behavior. We also will investigate the issue of chronic and repeated drunk driving.

Human Trafficking

- The legislature, over the course of the past three legislative sessions, has passed several bills to combat human trafficking. These bills have laid a good foundation, but more work can be done to assist these vulnerable populations, including policies to address homeless and unaccompanied youth and human trafficking prevention education for school-age children.



Public Safety

Recruitment and Retention for Law Enforcement and Corrections Professionals

- These important public safety officials help keep our families and communities safe. Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies and correctional institutions around the state are having difficulty attracting new recruits. Assembly Republicans will consider improving recruitment efforts to help fill these empty positions and retain quality employees.

PSAPs - 911 Funding

- Ensuring public safety for Wisconsinites means having a 911 emergency communication system that is up-to-date and reliable. Across the state public-safety answer points (PSAPs) provide the communication resources necessary for our public safety. New tools such as GPS tracking systems and text and video messaging are making it easier for law enforcement to provide emergency services. We need to make sure our emergency response systems are equipped to use this technology. Assembly Republicans will reform our 911 funding mechanism to ensure local governments are able to update this vital technology and move toward an upgraded 911 emergency system.



Volunteer Firefighters and EMS Certifications

- EMS volunteers are in high demand in our state, especially in rural areas. In a field where minutes are a critical factor in the outcome of an emergency situation, we need to ensure that it is not overly difficult for these individuals to acquire the necessary certification, recertification, training, and requirements they need to be such a vital resource in our communities.

Uninsured drivers

- Wisconsin must do more to increase compliance of its mandatory insurance law, which has been in place since 2009. Too many

individuals still do not purchase insurance, become involved in accidents, and are unable to pay for the damages caused to other vehicles and people. Safety on our roadways is critical and ensuring compliance of this safeguard could make a huge difference in the lives of those impacted.



Environmental Issues

Wisconsin is blessed with abundant natural resources that make our state a tourism and recreational destination. These resources have also helped Wisconsin feed the nation as one of the major agricultural drivers of our country. Assembly Republicans will continue our efforts to find the right balance between our agricultural heritage and economy and protecting our natural resources.

Groundwater Quantity Concerns

- Assembly Republicans will continue efforts to protect our groundwater resources and our agricultural economy. We will provide a more in-depth study of areas of the state with groundwater concerns, while exploring options such as metering to gain accurate information on water usage. Improving our knowledge base with science will help identify and implement additional solutions. We will also provide a predictable system for existing well owners to repair, replace, and transfer wells, and create a statutory private right of action to protect property owners from excessive water withdrawals by neighbors.

Protecting Water Quality

- In parts of Wisconsin unique geographical features, such as thin topsoil and fractured bedrock, have raised concerns about the safety and quality of groundwater. Assembly Republicans are committed to protecting groundwater quality in these areas and will develop the factual background necessary to make informed decisions about how best to accomplish this goal. We will partner with local farmers as they take the initiative to develop new processes and systems to address these concerns. We will explore options such as bio-digesters, nutrient recycling systems, reverse osmosis systems, and ultraviolet devices to help address this issue.



Stewardship Funding

- The stewardship program is valuable in preserving our state's beautiful natural areas and wild habitats, while protecting water quality and expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation. It is essential that we continue this program for the benefit of Wisconsin's tourism economy and conservation and sporting heritage. Assembly Republicans will focus on maintaining the program with a renewed commitment to cost containments and fiscally responsible prioritization.



Stronger Families

A strong family unit can be a key factor in the ultimate success of individuals in our state. Our children are our future teachers, doctors, and caregivers. We will work to ensure parents have the tools they need to provide safe and healthy homes.

Parental Leave Savings Accounts

- Assembly Republicans understand that circumstances can arise in each family that require taking some time away from work. For these important life moments, we support giving individuals more options. Options include the creation of tax-free parental leave savings accounts and incentives for employers who offer paid family leave. This could be an important tool in ensuring independence and security, no matter what stage of life you are in, and it could promote savings for crucial life moments and can prevent a dependence on government assistance.



Early Childhood Development and Quality Childcare

- Research has shown that the achievement gap begins at a very early age, and once that gap presents itself, it is difficult to diminish. The benefits of investing in children's early years is becoming more and more evident, and those early years in a child's life are crucial in the overall development, health, and success of a child for the rest of their life. One study showed that every \$1 spent on early childhood education returns an eventual \$8 or more to society by way of less corrections and government assistance spending.

Assembly Republicans will strive to maintain an adequate level of funding for quality childcare for low income families so parents can be confident their child is in a safe and educational environment while they work. We will continue to support existing programs that help these low income parents cover some childcare costs so they are able to work, provide for their families and be independent of government.

Savings for Early Childhood Education and Childcare

- The cost of education and childcare related expenses are growing at a rapid pace. In Wisconsin, the average cost of infant care exceeds the average cost of one year at a state public college. Currently, there are fewer options available to parents who want to save for childcare and other education related expenses prior to the start of kindergarten. Allowing parents more options to encourage savings for these often necessary expenses will further help parents stay in the workforce and be independent of government assistance.



Infant Care
Average annual cost
\$11,579



College
Average annual cost
\$8,406

Source: Economic Policy Institute

Homelessness

- In 2015, over 27,000 people received homelessness services and shelter in Wisconsin. It's been shown that a collaboration between local governments, state government, federal programs, in conjunction with a private sector partnership can be effective. Assembly Republicans understand that one of the most basic needs for our citizens is to have safe and reliable housing and we will look for ways we can further prevent homelessness and help the homeless.



Civil Liberties

The civil liberties we enjoy in a free and fair society must not be taken for granted. Assembly Republicans are focused on protecting the rights of citizens against governmental abuses of power.

Wrongful Conviction

- Our criminal justice system is one of the best in the world, but unfortunately sometimes innocent citizens are wrongfully convicted. These individuals have been deprived of their liberty and ability to raise a family, find employment, and establish themselves in their community. Unfortunately, Wisconsin currently reimburses these individuals a paltry amount compared to the years lost off their lives. It is time that we address Wisconsin's inadequate \$25,000 compensation limit.

Access to Civil Legal Services

- Assembly Republicans will review the recommendations of the Legislative Council Study Committee on access to civil legal services and explore opportunities to ensure citizens can assert their rights against aggressive or frivolous lawsuits.

Promoting Self-Sufficiency and Fighting Fraud

• Assembly Republicans understand that some families are doing everything they can to get by but still can't make ends meet. We want to ensure that public benefits go only to those who need them and not to those who are taking advantage of the system. We want to do all we can to ensure the integrity of these government programs and will continue our strong record of fighting fraud, waste and abuse.

- We will explore possible changes to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards to increase program integrity and penalties for those who intentionally commit fraud.
- It is currently difficult to quantify the total number of benefits an individual receives from different agencies as state agencies may use different programs and software to track program participation. We will further explore how a statement of *total* benefits could be developed and ways our state agencies can better communicate with each other in this regard.
- While it is important to ensure there is greater benefit for Wisconsinites to work than to receive government assistance, it is also important to make sure these incentives are not abused. Wisconsin spends millions annually on the earned income tax credit, which pays cash refunds to earners under certain circumstances. Assembly Republicans will investigate this program to ensure these dollars are going to their intended purpose.

HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY



- There are many needs within our communities that can be met through community service. Assembly Republicans will look to revive efforts of volunteerism in our neighborhoods. For those who cannot find or work a full-time job, the benefits of volunteering is twofold. Important community needs will be met and those volunteering will learn new skills, connect with others, and improve not only their lives, but the lives of others in their communities.
- Assembly Republicans will look at expanding the current part-time work requirements to other state benefit programs. Part-time work can often lead to full-time work, gained skills and experience, and continued participation in the workforce.



- Assembly Republicans understand that rural Wisconsin faces unique challenges and has distinct needs compared to more urban areas of our state. The Rural Wisconsin Initiative will continue its efforts to address the unique needs of rural Wisconsin on issues of health, education, workforce, and technology. We support fostering ways to help rural Wisconsin succeed, and look forward to seeing the package the Rural Wisconsin Initiative brings forth.



- What better way to learn about the history of our state than to experience it firsthand. Assembly Republicans will encourage not only 4th graders, but all Wisconsinites to make a trip to the Capitol in 2017 as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Capitol.